Self-trust is the essence of heroism.
—EMERSON

THEOSOPHY

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THE IDEA OF THE INDIVIDUAL

THERE are some areas of thought where the student of Theosophy is peculiarly advantaged, by reason of his access to the premises and reasoned conclusions of the Theosophical philosophy. One of these areas is represented by the widespread concern, today, for the "individual."

For many people, what is currently spoken of as the "value of the individual" is founded on little more than a vaguely understood intuition. People have the general impression that in a free society, individuality is something that must be preserved, but the passage from this impression to ideas about why individuals need to maintain their integrity *as* individuals, and how this is accomplished, is marked by uncertainty and confusion. We start with a species of belief about the good of man, and end with slogans and group opinions.

At least theoretical clarity is achieved by adding the teaching of reincarnation to humanistic convictions about the individual. Through reincarnation we gain the idea that the individual is a soul in evolution. From this it follows that the "progress" of the individual travels in large measure a subjective course. The individual learns with and from others; the field of his experience is social; but the *learning* is individual. From the viewpoint of soul-development, learning and decision-making are aspects of the same growth-process. The two cannot be separated. And since no one can do another's learning for him, neither can anyone do another's decision-

making. The individual is inseparably connected with all his fellows, and learns with and through them, even in their behalf, but the actual learning he must do himself. Learning is an egoic act, initiated by the self-reliant soul.

This view of individuality and of the individual throws a light on the meaning of what we call "communication." Whether a man writes a book, an article, or a simple letter, he can reach only one final destination with his ideas: the sensitive intelligence of a growing, choosing individual. Whether his audience is made by one person or by many millions, the ultimate transaction is the same. Individuals are going to hear or read what is said, and be affected by it in one direction or another. It follows that useful communication transmits ideas which individuals can do something with, toward building further structures of understanding of their own.

And from this it follows, again, that the relationships which are of primary value among human beings are *educational* relationships.

The history of the individual cycle of reincarnation contributes perspective to this analysis. Only a small part of the time occupied by the cycle of life from birth to birth is devoted to the objective social relationships of the individual. The entirety of *Devachan,* the time spent in sleep, the hours given to reflection and wondering —all this time finds the ego in some subjective condition of awareness. He is alone with himself. This is his inner life—a life bounded by the radius of his consciousness. At other times, he is experiencing the intersection of other fields of consciousness with his own; which means that he is having opportunity to enlarge his own awareness, to make it more inclusive. But in either case, he remains an individual. Even in the act of self-identification with others, even in the fullness of his feelings of brotherhood, he is still an individual, thinking of himself as a part of the rest of life, experiencing the community of being with his fellows. He cannot *make* other men feel as he does; they cannot choose for him. He rises or falls, loves or hates, grows or contracts, as an individual. There is no implication of the Heresy of Separateness in this statement of the law of evolution. The genius of being human lies in this capacity of the individual to become the All, while remaining an integral center of consciousness.

For the Theosophist, then, the importance of the individual is not merely a political verity. It is a philosophical, a psychological,

even a cosmological verity. And for the practical purposes of daily life, it is above all an educational verity.

The same general train of thought may be followed with respect to the teaching of Karma. The impacts and influences of Karma are distributed by many channels and on many levels of experience. The final focus of Karma, however, remains the individual. All karma is thus individual, in the same sense that the final destiny of the individual is determined by the way in which that ego chooses to act, whatever his Karma, and whatever the Karma of his age and local circumstances. Karma may instruct him in the sufferings of his fellows; Karma may show him how men have acted together in the past, and how in various ways groups are differentiated one from another. But all these lessons find their resolution in how *he* determines to act. Unless the meaning of experience finds its way to the individual, and unless that individual is able to reconcile his experience with his understanding of the laws of life, some *deus ex machina* will be needed, some extra-cosmic god invoked to balance the equation in an irrational and arbitrary manner. In just such ways are tyrannical theological systems brought into being—to make up for the incapacity of individuals to comprehend the fruits of human action and the course of human destiny. The soul *must* learn to find its own way, to draw the Ariadne's thread of meaning into all the dark turnings of experience.

So it is here, in the Odyssey of the Reincarnating Ego, that the full meaning of Individuality may be discerned. This teaching is the key to the mystery of the individual and to the importance of an environment which affords as much as possible of both freedom and responsibility to the evolving soul.

Man is declared to be that creature who is constantly in search of himself, a creature who at every moment of his existence must examine and scrutinize the conditions of his existence. He is a being in search of meaning.

—PLATO

letters • questions • comment

Editors, THEOSOPHY: "Comment" for May seems to me somewhat dogmatic in tone. I would feel that it would be better to rephrase such statements as, "There are good and bad religions," and, "An authoritarian God is a dangerous God, and any religion which claims to draw strength from a single miraculous individual is a dangerous religion." If we believe in reincarnation and evolution, then we should be able to go along with the idea that certain aspects of religion are good for the one who embraces them at a particular time. You quote H.P.B., and she says that "there is one truth which finds expression in all the various religions." It is only the feeling that one possesses all the truth in his particular version of religion that is wrong. I go along with the idea that truth is ever changing and that the search for it is continuous.

Of course one can say that only the *true gnosis* is completely adequate and "good" for the full development of humanity. But, as we all concede, none of us can manage the whole of *the true gnosis* at our imperfect stage of development. We necessarily have to segregate one portion of thought at a time to concentrate on. In the process of our endeavor to understand this "segment of the Whole," we tend to overemphasize the area of our own particular interest and so become unbalanced in our perspective. In our preoccupation with *our* segment of Truth, we come up with distortions because we cannot see the whole picture—we can see only "in part," as St. Paul says, but we *think* we have the whole answer and try to pressure other people to agree with us and join our ranks. Along with this effort come the excesses of self-centeredness and other negative expressions, false claims, etc. Every so often we come up against those who have been focussing on a different "segment of the Whole" and have become equally as unbalanced along their line of thought as we have in ours. Then ensues a clash of one kind or another.

After much of this kind of experience (probably lives of it), we eventually begin to arrive at the early stages of understanding that

all these segments contain within themselves both "good" and "bad" aspects—"good" because they are part of the Whole, and "bad" because they are un-whole and imperfect and need all other segments to become rounded out and complete. H.P.B. says that *as man's perception grows,* "humanity will at last be cursed no longer with artificial polarizations, but will find itself bathing in eternal truth."

As we begin to understand "that the complete truth can be found only in the combined views of All" (H.P.B.), we come to realize that it is our job to *rise above* the differences in order to get the point of view of the Whole. I feel that we cannot *effectively* condemn any "segment of the Whole" as "bad" either psychologically or otherwise, because each has its defense, and all that ensues is the clash—and misunderstanding.

What I feel is important is to try to reach a "common denominator" into which the parts can be fitted. In other words I feel it is necessary to find a positive approach in trying to enlighten the world with such concepts as: "What is needed is to impress men with the idea that, if the root of mankind is ONE, then there must also be one truth which finds expression in all the various religions." (H.P.B.) Therefore I would think that, rather than make a distinction between the gnosis of the Theosophist and any other doctrine, we (as Theosophists) will get farther and do more constructively to dwell on the fact that "Theosophy is like the white ray of the spectrum and every religion (or doctrine) one of the seven prismatic colours." This, I submit, would tend to be in line with "rising above differences" which is necessary if we hope to make use of Buddhi-Manas (this is probably not said correctly but perhaps you get my idea).

All of this holds in the attempts of Theosophists to shed more light on other departments of life as well, it seems to me. All of our living is fragmented because we are not capable of being completely integrated. The study of the Ancient Wisdom and the attempt to make use of its teachings in daily life helps the integration process. Helping people understand this in a positive way is our great opportunity for service, as I see it.

Getting back to the area of religion, I would feel that it is because of this necessary fragmentation in the process of evolution that one religion after another was brought to humanity to focus on. Incidentally, I have read that the word "religion" means literally to

"bind back," and the word as we are using it has come to mean a "binding back to God," or a means of helping man return to his Source. When thought of in this way, it would seem to me that when we question the worth of any one religion we should start with the individual or individuals that accept that religion, and question whether it is helping *them* on the long path back to *their* Source and whether it is beneficial spiritually to them. This, I submit, is difficult to determine without being a part of that religion one's self, and even then there is a psychological problem involved because what is helpful to a person at one stage of development would not necessarily be helpful at another (at our stage as Theosophists, for instance). Having passed a certain stage we cannot always adequately understand its needs. So it seems to me that it requires care when making broad general statements about what is a "good" or "bad" religion (or aspects thereof)—and this goes for the conceptions various people hold of what God is.

Sometimes it helps to think of the amount of such concepts that can be conveyed to a child. How can a small child be helped to understand who God is when the little child is at the stage where Mommy and Daddy are the most important security-insuring beings in his world? I feel that that part of humanity which still can only conceive of God as anthropomorphic is still at the conceptual ability of the child stage; and until they grow a little in this respect there is no use trying to make them understand that they are all wrong to believe that God is like a man; also my point is that such effort might even be harmful to them psychologically as it could take away from them the psychological security which is necessary to all of us until we have reached a pretty high stage. It is similar to the harm done to a small child whose faith in his parents is shaken in one way or another before he is strong enough within himself to withstand such an experience.

It seems to me that all this is true for all the various stages of man's needs, not just the most childlike—for his various concepts and doctrines with which we do not agree. Certainly we can try to point out the helpful road as we see it—but with a positive approach and in the form of suggestion rather than labeling it wrong, false, narrow, harmful, etc.—at least this is the way it seems to me. Somewhere in this area is the question of the difference between the "anthropomorphic God" and the "personal God." I feel that the con-

ception is a changing one, according to the need of the individual, and also according to the type of the individual.

Reader

There is no doubt about the fact that a Theosophical platform, to deserve the name, must accord respect for every religious belief, so long as that belief does not establish a criterion of superiority over others. The righteousness of sectarianism, though, is foreign to every Theosophical principle, since the attitudes which lead to the forming of nuclei of universal brotherhood are not compatible with the notion that one's relationship to deity can be evaluated by association or belief. The critical question in respect to a "personal God," then, perhaps becomes this: Is the God a Christian God, a Mohammedan or Hindu God, or is God a universalized deity? If "God" is thought of as exclusively Christian, and this is often the case, the notion is "dangerous" because it is sectarian in an exclusive sense. Sectarianism is dangerous because it leads to delusions of individual and group superiority on the basis of belief—and it is from notions of individual or group superiority that come the promptings which lead to fratricide. In the name of religion and of a personal God, groups and nations have perennially felt themselves more worthy of survival than those of other affiliations, and hence accomplished what H.P.B. calls a retrograde "re-involution into the animal kingdom." It would seem clear, then, that Theosophists must oppose the *psychology* of sectarianism, whatever its roots.

To oppose sectarianism, or to point out the dangers of a God who is partisan by religious definition, is not, however, to inveigh against persons. But belief in an authoritarian God cannot, on the other hand, be regarded as an agency which leads to the gradual maturing of the higher human consciousness. Partisanship needs therapy; partisanship cannot be regarded as a step in therapy.

When the current language of psychotherapy begins to include genuine philosophical dimensions, a good many Theosophical perspectives emerge. And, as one should therefore expect, the philosophical psycho-therapist is ambivalent on the subject of religion, but is aware of and deliberates about his ambivalence. Dr. Jerome D. Frank, in his recent volume, *Persuasion and Healing,* makes some remarks on the relationship between the individual and various schools of psychotherapy which are parallel to the relationship of the individual with various fields of religion. Dr. Frank writes:

> Much, if not all, of the effectiveness of different forms of psychotherapy may be due to those features that all have in common rather than to those that distinguish them from each other. This does not necessarily mean that all therapies are interchangeable. It may well turn out, when types of patients and effects of therapy are better understood, that certain approaches are better for some types of patients than for others and that they differ in certain of their effects. Until these questions are clarified, the advance of both knowledge and practice is probably better served by members of different schools defending their own positions, while being tolerant of other schools, than by being uncritically eclectic.

But along with a necessary breadth of tolerance and understanding in respect to ideas or systems in which people place great faith, other considerations come to view, particularly in relation to the idea of an authoritarian God. On this subject, psychoanalyst Erich Fromm is especially provocative. In *Psychoanalysis and Religion,* Dr. Fromm writes:

> The mystics have been deeply imbued with the experience of man's strength, his likeness to God, and with the idea that God needs man as much as man needs God; they have understood the sentence that man is created in the image of God to mean the fundamental identity of God and man. Not fear and submission but love and the assertion of one's own powers are the basis of mystical experience. *God is not a symbol of power over man but of man's own powers.*
>
> While in humanistic religion God is the image of man's higher self, a symbol of what man potentially is or ought to become, in authoritarian religion God becomes the sole possessor of what was originally man's: of his reason and his love. The more perfect God becomes, the more imperfect becomes man.
>
> But this alienation from his own powers not only makes man feel slavishly dependent on God, it makes him bad too. He becomes a man without faith in his fellow men or in himself, without the experience of his own love, of his own power of reason. As a result the separation between the "holy" and the "secular" occurs. In his worldly activities man acts without love, in that sector of his life which is reserved to religion he feels himself to be a sinner (which he actually is, since to live without love is to live in sin) and tries to recover some of his lost humanity by being in touch with God. Simultaneously, he tries to win forgiveness by emphasizing his own helplessness and worthlessness.
>
> What people think and feel is rooted in their character and their character is moulded by the total configuration of their practice of life—more precisely, by the socio-economic and political structure of their society. In societies ruled by a powerful

> minority which holds the masses in subjection, the individual will be so imbued with fear, so incapable of feeling strong or independent, that his religious experience will be authoritarian. Whether he worships a punishing, awesome God or a similarly conceived leader makes little difference.

On this topic, Part II of "Misunderstood Biblical Traditions" (Sept. THEOS.) offers correlative reading—as, for instance, one of the closing sentences: "In the view of the Theosophist, the only *fear* that does any good and is worthy of the human being, that stabilizes the mind and makes a person think before he acts, is that fear or *caution* which springs from and is rooted in a knowledge of the Divine Law of Karma, *which is one with God.*"

FROM PREFACE TO PART II—"ISIS UNVEILED"

Were it possible, we would keep this work out of the hands of many Christians whom its perusal would not benefit, and for whom it was not written. We allude to those whose faith in their respective churches is pure and sincere, and those whose sinless lives reflect the glorious example of that Prophet of Nazareth, by whose mouth the spirit of truth spake loudly to humanity. Such there have been at all times. History preserves the names of many as heroes, philosophers, philanthropists, martyrs, and holy men and women; but how many more have lived and died, unknown but to their intimate acquaintances, unblessed but by their humble beneficiaries! These have ennobled Christianity, but would have shed the same lustre upon any other faith they might have professed—for they were higher than their creed. They are to be found at this day in pulpit and pew, in palace and cottage; but the increasing materialism, worldliness and hypocrisy are fast diminishing their proportionate number. Their charity, and simple, child-like faith in the infallibility of their Bible, their dogmas, and their clergy, bring into full activity all the virtues that are implanted in our common nature. . . .

An analysis of religious beliefs in general, this volume is in particular directed against theological Christianity, the chief opponent of free thought. It contains not one word against the pure teachings of Jesus, but unsparingly denounces their debasement into pernicious ecclesiastical systems that are ruinous to man's faith in his immortality. . . .

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

ON FIRST ACQUAINTANCE— "THE SECRET DOCRINE"

IV

> From the first-born the thread between the silent watcher and his shadow becomes more strong and radiant with every change (*re-incarnation*) . . . . The Watcher, or the divine prototype, is at the upper rung of the ladder of being; the shadow, at the lower. . . . "My Father, that is in Heaven, and I—are one," says the Christian Scripture. (*The Secret Doctrine* I, 265.)

THIS idea that we are part of something that transcends us, as our mental thoughts transcend, yet affect, the body, gives us a "seed idea" applicable in many directions. In another light this idea is touched upon in *The Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge* (p. 128) during a discussion of the "inner" and "outer" force:

> Besides the force acting *in* matter there is also a force acting *on* matter. . . . All such differences in the objective world result only from the peculiarities of differentiation of matter on which the one free force acts, helped in this by that portion of its essence which we call imprisoned force, or material molecules. The worker within, the inherent force, ever tends to unite with its parent essence without.

Yet if we do not ceaselessly try to follow the voice of conscience, the connection with the transcendental part of ourselves, how do we become anything but a crucifier of our Higher Self? As H.P.B. puts it (*Transactions,* p. 68): "By the very fact that, though dual and during life the Higher is distinct from the Lower, the Father and Son *are one,* and because that in reuniting with the parent Ego, the lower Soul fastens upon and impresses upon it all its bad as well as good actions—both have to suffer, the Higher Ego, though innocent and without blemish, has to bear the punishment of the misdeeds committed by the *lower* Self together with it in their future incarnation. The whole doctrine of atonement is built upon this old esoteric tenet; for the Higher Ego is the antitype of that which is on this earth the type, namely the personality." She continues:

> Volumes might be written upon the pregenetic and postgenetic development of type and antitype—of Christ-*Kshetrajna,* the

> "God-Man," the First-born, symbolized as the "lamb." The *Secret Doctrine* shows that the Manasa-Putras or incarnating Egos have taken upon themselves, voluntarily and knowingly, the burden of all the future sins of their future personalities. Thence it is easy to see that it is neither Mr. A nor Mr. B, nor any of the personalities that periodically clothe the Self-Sacrificing Ego, which are the real Sufferers, but verily the innocent *Christos* within us. Hence the mystic Hindus say that the Eternal Self, or the Ego (the one in three and three in one), is the "Charioteer" or driver; the personalities are the temporary and evanescent passengers; while the horses are the animal passions of man. It is, then, true to say that when we remain deaf to the Voice of our Conscience, we crucify the Christos within us.

One can remain as a focus of help to all beings, traveling incognito as a representative of his Father (or "conscience"), yet be in the midst of the mundane world. And it just might be that one of the most powerful ways we can help our fellowman is to thoroughly assimilate the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky, for, as they teach us to think abstractly, this in turn may assist us to render help as an abstract vehicle of service—not simply as a charitable personality. The importance of this view becomes clearer when we remember that the good or evil we do mentally is an *act* in a karmic sense. As put in the *Transactions* (p. 142):

> Kama-Manas finds expression in acts, Buddhi-Manas in words. Esoterically, thought is more responsible and punishable than act. But exoterically, it is the reverse. Therefore, in ordinary human law, an assault is more severely punished than the thought or intention, i.e., the threat, whereas *Karmically* it is the contrary.

Thoughts along this or a similar vein should impress upon us the need of mental reform. How many of us could expose the thoughts we have had during the past twenty-four hours with no shame at some, no embarrassment at others, nor any dismay at the chaotic aspect they display? Why do we not seriously take up the work of bringing more order into the mental chaos that engulfs us? (It is granted that one can see in a general sort of way a certain mental order in his day. But can he do this if his thoughts of all varieties are reflected to him as a *montage*, so that he gets something of an abstract glyph of his mental day, rather than a discriminatively chosen one?) While realizing that we may not travel too far in any one incarnation, and even admitting with Arjuna that the task is as difficult as trying to harness the wind, still we should not abandon the task. H.P.B. explains the rationale (*S.D.* I, 638-9):

For, with every effort of will toward purification and unity with that "Self-god," one of the lower rays breaks and the spiritual entity of man is drawn higher and ever higher to the ray that supersedes the first, until, from ray to ray, the inner man is drawn into the one and highest beam of the Parent—SUN. Thus, "the events of humanity *do* run co-ordinately with the number forms," since the single units of that humanity proceed one and all from the same source—the *central* and its *shadow*, the visible SUN. . . . The closer the union between the mortal reflection MAN and his celestial PROTOTYPE, the less dangerous the external conditions and subsequent reincarnations—which neither Buddhas nor Christs can escape. This is not superstition, least of all is it *Fatalism*. The latter implies a blind course of some still blinder power, and man is a free agent during his stay on earth. He cannot escape his *ruling* Destiny, but he has the choice of two paths that lead him in that direction, and he can reach the goal of misery—if such is decreed to him, either in the snowy white robes of the Martyr, or in the soiled garments of a volunteer in the iniquitous course. . . . This destiny is guided either by the heavenly voice of the invisible *prototype* outside of us, or by our more intimate *astral*, or inner man, who is but too often the evil genius of the embodied entity called man. Both these lead on the outward, but one of them must prevail . . ."

TENSION AND TRANSFORMATION

Mental health is based on a certain degree of tension, the tension between what one has already achieved and what one still ought to accomplish, or the gap between what one is and what one should become. Such a tension is inherent in the human being and therefore is indispensable to mental well-being. We should not, then, be hesitant about challenging man with a potential meaning for him to fulfill. It is only thus that we evoke his will to meaning from its state of latency. I consider it a dangerous misconception of mental hygiene to assume that what man needs in the first place is equilibrium or, as it is called in biology, "homeostasis," i.e., a tensionless state. What man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for some goal worthy of him. What he needs is not the discharge of tension at any cost, but the call of a potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled by him.

—VIKTOR FRANKL

YOUTH FORUM

There seems to be a new spirit in the air, a sense of urgency and apprehension, which has become prevalent only since the last world war. This new restlessness, considered in relation to the explosive world situation, makes evident how essential it is for Theosophical ideas to gain greater currency. It is therefore a bit disheartening to realize that while there are usually one or two newcomers at each Theosophical meeting, very few come back for study. Why do these ideas so often fail to "catch on"? Is there some element in the present world atmosphere for which we are not adequately providing?

Before it is possible to come to any decision concerning the adequacy of the usual presentation of Theosophical teachings, it would seem necessary to examine the nature of the "atmosphere" spoken of by the questioner. It is immediately apparent that this new air of seriousness has several aspects, not all of which are especially positive. There is, for instance, too much seriousness (almost grimness) in most people's search for amusement. In order to understand the state of mind which gives rise to this search, it is important to realize that the word "diversion," both etymologically and in reality, signifies a "turning away from." But from what? Certainly from the tedium of daily life, but is that a sufficient answer? What causes the tedium, the boredom?

The French philosopher, Gabriel Marcel, speaks of a certain "ebbing of life's tide," a severing of "the nuptial bond between man and life," and ascribes this phenomenon in part to man's perverse interpretation of the ancient statement, *eritis sicut dei*: "you shall be as gods." The statement was not meant as an injunction to build huge, frightening cities or to send rockets into space; it was not, that is, an injunction to *conquer* nature but rather to become one of her creators. Further, it seems clear that this misinterpretation has been quite willful—just man's timid reaction to his intuition that any serious attempt to make himself godlike entails not only a tremendous exertion of the will, but an enormous responsibility as well.

If all this is true, one may perhaps be allowed the mischievous suspicion that even some of the most respectable and complex of scientific enquiries smack of escapism; at any rate, most people's urgent pursuit of diversion certainly does. As Marcel so beautifully sums it up: "The ego is without any doubt faced with a dilemma: to fulfill itself or to escape. Where it does not attain fulfillment, it is only conscious of itself as of an unendurable gaping void from which it must seek protection at any price." This search for protection has in recent years extended far beyond the mere search for amusement; it has invaded almost every human enterprise. The blandness we see in the popular arts, the political crafts, the workings of corporations, the products of factories, the creations of modern architecture, etc., all represent one gigantic diversion—a huge but flimsy contraption set up to distract our eyes, to keep us from having to face that horrendous yawning void, which is ourselves.

All these considerations may help us to understand a few of the elements which go to make up the general "atmosphere" of our times. It is at once obvious how greatly a knowledge of basic Theosophical concepts would help to relieve this present spiritual crisis. Aware of these concepts, men would be conscious, not of a void, but of a plenitude; they would see man, not as an aggregation of particles, but as an immortal pilgrim, eternally evolving. Therefore it is indeed somewhat disheartening to see how few working Theosophists there are in contrast to the number of people who have at one time or another come into contact with the Teachings. Some people, of course, consider it just a sophisticated form of "diversion" to make the rounds of lectures and exhibits, to increase their store of curious bits of information—in short, to be "in the know." It is doubtful that such people are capable of understanding the real implications of Theosophy, since basically they do not want new understanding.

On the other hand, it does not seem very useful in this short space to discuss all the things we can do nothing about. Of *course,* it is partly the newcomer's own fault if he doesn't get the point of what is being said, but a far more important matter to consider at present is to what degree it may be *our* fault as well. The importance at this time of an honest self-examination cannot be exaggerated, since unless mankind is given some basic principles and is persuaded to turn toward life instead of away from it, our whole civilization is destined for insanity and destruction.

The notes which follow, of course, represent only one student's impressions, and should be considered simply as a jumping-off place for the reader's own thoughts:

First, there are some simple, almost mundane, matters which, if attended to, would help greatly to establish a rapport between the newcomer and the Teachings. For one thing, the newcomer probably assumes that the person giving a talk from the platform is an authority on Theosophy, in much the same way that a priest is an authority on church doctrine. Accordingly, if the talk is rather vague (and it is hard to avoid vagueness in the short time alloted the speaker), the newcomer is likely to think that Theosophy itself is vague, just a collection of unproved theories with little bearing on reality. It would seem essential, therefore, that the speaker should make it quite plain at every meeting that those who have platform assignments are only students, more or less progressed, and that anything said represents just the sketchiest outline of that immense body of knowledge for which the works of H. P. Blavatsky serve as an introduction.

Yet the reiteration of this fact would not constitute a justification for sloppy delivery; even if the newcomer intellectually accepts the speaker's status as humble student, it is difficult for him to avoid having an adverse *emotional* reaction if he is subjected to repeated mistakes in simple grammar, poorly-expressed ideas, etc. Most likely a person comes to a lecture with the vague hope of being inspired, of finding solutions to his deepest problems; yet he might feel reluctant to ask real questions if the person to whom he would address them appears even less informed than himself. We are speaking now only about appearances, true! but the sad fact is that people base most of their judgments upon appearances; and when it is really so unnecessary to give a poor impression, why not improve our English and our delivery and give a better one?

A subtler problem lies in the difference in mental rhythm between the Theosophist and the newcomer. The latter, who is probably thoroughly steeped in the worldly "atmosphere," is likely to be intellectual, skeptical, and impatient; the older students, on the other hand, are familiar with the basic postulates and know just how the meetings are run. There are some real potential dangers in this situation, one of which is that the older students, when speaking of what they consider self-evident truths, will make a general statement and

then forget to back it up. Sometimes, for example, the subject of reincarnation is introduced in a parenthetical and most unconvincing manner; or else a term such as "Atlantis" or "Atma-Buddha-Manas" is mentioned and not pursued. Such occurrences are likely to make the newcomer classify Theosophists as cultists. All statements need to be painstakingly supported, and even then they should not be labelled "proven," much less "self-evident." Dogmatism simply has no place in Theosophy.

Another danger—also the result of carelessness—is that the newcomer's question will be misunderstood by the lecturer. This happens fairly frequently, and seems to result in part from the fact that the questioner is speaking from the context of his own experiences, and is using his own terminology (*i.e.*, non-Theosophical terminology). It therefore would seem essential that the lecturer listen closely in an effort to grasp the real intent behind the question, not in order to get involved in personalities and answer the questioner instead of the question, but simply in order to understand exactly what the question *is*. Furthermore, in giving an answer, it is important that the speaker attempt to create a bridge that would in some way bring the newcomer into a real contact with this living philosophy. Practically speaking, this would at least imply translating the teachings into the questioner's own terminology.

In relation to this matter of translation, it is important to sense the full quality of the modern "atmosphere," and to determine in what ways it is different from that of 1888, the year *The Secret Doctrine* was published; for it may be that some of the arguments of that time no longer need to be made. For example, it is sometimes disconcerting to a newcomer to hear attacks levelled against scientific and religious materialism, attacks which carry little weight since they apply primarily to nineteenth-century science and religion. And it is all the more disconcerting to him since he did not come with the slightest desire to hear attacks, applicable or otherwise, he came to learn about Theosophy.

The works of H.P.B. are obviously essential, but as has just been shown, it is possible to use them in a wrong way. There are other wrong ways as well, one of which brings us to the subject of originality. As an approach to this subject, we might consider the delivery of the Three Fundamentals, since they are given at almost every meeting. The familiar exposition of them (in *S.D.* I, 14-17) is ex-

tremely powerful and enlightening, to be sure; but is it not true that the constant repetition of the exact wording of some of H.P.B.'s phrases has, for most of the audience, greatly reduced the significance of those phrases by turning them into catchwords? What we need, it seems clear, is not a greater cleverness, or knack for thinking up ingenious applications; rather, we need to internalize the Fundamentals, assimilate them; for, once they are part of ourselves (or better, once we are part of them), we will naturally speak in our own voice, drawing examples and analogies from our own experiences. Then our words, even if they are not the best of words, will be alive and ring true.

In fact, doesn't everything at last depend upon how much and how consciously we are in love with this wonderful philosophy—if love is the feeling of awe one has when confronting a pure essence, an essence independent of the words which clothed it when it was originally presented to us? And in the most practical terms, if Theosophists themselves do not seem enthusiastic about their own philosophy, how enthusiastic can we expect newcomers to be? This enthusiasm, of course, must be based on more than intellectual delight; if there is not an ardent love-affair between ourselves and this essence just spoken of, we are not likely to find the courage to be truly honest; that is to say, we will tend to be swayed by that "atmosphere" of escapism which dominates our civilization. There are disturbing evidences of such influence even now. Certain subjects never happen to get mentioned, it seems, or if they are, it is in a frustratingly general and antiseptic way. Young people especially can have difficulty attuning themselves to the philosophy if an important aspect of their lives (and one which may represent their only experience of human warmth in this loveless world) is referred to by the speaker in a forcedly off-hand manner, given a Sanskrit label and stuck into a list of "lower" principles (namely, number four). As a result, young people may get the impression that Theosophy has little to do with their own lives, true though it *may* be in its statements about the Universe.

Perhaps, then, a solution to the problem can be found as we strive to gain increasing intimacy with the spirit of the teachings, for out of that process will come the courage to be in all ways honest, and to recognize the simple fact that we are engaged in a battle. This is not just a metaphor, and we romanticize the nature of this battle only at our own risk. There is no romantic throb about it. In fact we may

very well be losing it; for our foe is nothing other than this insidious, formless, ubiquitous "atmosphere," which has come in order to murder the heart of man. There is hope only if we change our lives, only if we recognize that as students of Theosophy we must *prepare* for the coming cycle, not just wait for it (although the term "student" may be somewhat misleading if applied to many of us, since it implies the act of studying). These words sound harsh, perhaps even rude. They were not meant to be, but were spoken out of the stark certainty that right now a great deal is at stake. Yet if they must be considered as rude, let them at least have the effect of a rude awakening.

Perhaps this is asking too much. After all, we're only human, aren't we? . . . But there is no other way: we must change our lives, turn ourselves toward life, and, taking the position of the soul, radiate outwards from that effulgent centre. Only then will we overcome that man-made void which threatens to engulf us. Only then will the battle be won.

IMPLICATIONS OF THEOSOPHIC "WORK"

If we make and keep ourselves ready and fit, we shall be used as occasion and fitness permit. We are dealing with *minds,* not persons. The Soul, being conformed to the mind, reacts upon the whole nature. If, as persons, we could all look at the world of ideas in that way, we would learn more, gain more discrimination, and be more useful to others. The right start is everything. If this is gained and held, then all that each one does carries him and others in the right direction. In this Work, natures are intensified, good and bad come to the surface. The "cleaning-up" process is gradual and each must do his own work of elimination where such work is seen to be needed. The barriers to help from Masters are in ourselves and nowhere else. We can only use our opportunities and knowledge to the best possible advantage and continue to do so, if we would not ourselves fall short of the requirement of "the Law of Laws—Compassion absolute."

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE ASSIMILATIVE PROCESS

DURING the last war there was a tale concerning three men cast adrift on a raft in the Pacific, with scant provision to sustain life—a factual, published report. When rescued, two were haggard skeletons, but the third had preserved his normal health, weight, and vitality. The inquiry disclosed no irregularity in daily division of rations throughout the entire period; but the third GI's personal story, corroborated by both companions, was probably never interpreted in its true light. The man had simply, somehow, every time he ate *imagined* his crackers to be a banquet. The story merits thought.

Much of successful living rests upon imagination and faith. But between faith in authority, and faith in one's spiritual intuition, there is a very great difference. One is human credulity, the other human belief and intuition.

None of us is soon going to entertain the notion of moving a mountain, but there is the ascription to the Ego of such power. The reality of such power no doubt implies that the import of "things" is not this, but other—an importance evading the reason. Imagination, per se, is defined as one of the plastic powers of the higher soul, a plasticity one's own of the mentally and spiritually formative principles. Its controlled and guided use evolves the saints and adept helpers of the human family. Imagination lies deep behind that "firmness, the power of cohesion holding all together." What we desire may be accomplished by faith and imagination; but faith must *confirm* the imagination, for faith *establishes* the will. "Faith without will is like a windmill without wind—barren of results."

Fear kills. What happens to the *man* status with Egoic powers rendered impotent? We perceive lives of ignorance where will, faith, imagination, are guided by desire solely. Nature's laws thus driven may never excuse but for always perpetuate the avidya to circumvent the "coming out," the living a "separate" free life.

What is Faith? The true is spiritual knowledge. Without that kind of knowledge there can be no faith. Instigators of universal travail, disorderly productions of the human brain—let these not be called imagination and faith. None can have a true faith in a thing that is not true; such is merely belief or opinion based upon ignorance of the truth. Faith must possess.

THE POSITION OF ASTRONOMY

IT is true that on the whole Astronomy has achieved triumphs more brilliant than those of most other sciences. But if it has done much in the direction of satisfying man's straining and thirsting mind and his noble aspirations for knowledge, physical as to most of its particulars, it has ever laughed at his puny efforts to wrest the great secrets of Infinitude by the help of only mechanical apparatus.

While the spectroscope has shown the probable similarity of terrestrial and sidereal substance, the chemical actions peculiar to the variously progressed orbs of space have not been detached, nor proven to be identical with those observed on our own planet. In this particular, Esoteric Psychology may be useful. But who of the men of science would consent to confront it with their own handiwork? Who of them would recognize the superiority and greater trustworthiness of the Adept's knowledge over their own hypotheses? For in their case they can claim the mathematical correctness of their deductive reasonings based on the alleged unerring precision of the modern instruments; while the Adepts can claim but their knowledge of the ultimate nature of the materials they have worked with for ages, resulting in the phenomena produced.

However much it may be urged that a deductive argument, besides being an incomplete syllogistic form, may often be in conflict with fact, that their major propositions may not always be correct, although the predicates of their conclusions seem correctly drawn, spectrum analysis will not be acknowledged as inferior to purely *spiritual* research. Nor, before developing his *sixth* sense, will the man of science concede the error of his theories as to the solar spectrum, unless he abjures to some degree at least his marked weakness for conditional and disjunctive syllogisms ending in dilemmas. At present the "Adepts" do not see any help for it.

The sequence of martyrs to the great universal truths has never been once broken, and the long list of known and unknown sufferers,

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NOTE.—A student's collation from the works of H. P. Blavatsky.

headed with the name Galileo, now closes with that of Zöllner. Is the world of science aware of the real cause of Zöllner's premature death? When the fourth dimension of space becomes a scientific reality like the fourth state of matter, he may have a statue raised to him by grateful posterity. But this will neither recall him to life, nor will it obliterate the days and months of mental agony that harassed the soul of this intuitional, far-seeing, modest genius, made even after his death to receive the donkey's kick of misrepresentation and to be publicly charged with lunacy.

While the astronomer has achieved marvels in the elucidation of the visible relations of the orbs of space, he has learnt nothing of their inner constitution. His science has led him no farther towards a reading of that inner mystery than has that of the geologist, who can tell us only of the earth's superficial layers, and that of the physiologist, who has until now been able to deal only with man's outer shell, or *Sthula Sarira*. Occultists have asserted, and go on asserting daily the fallacy of judging the essence by its outward manifestations, the ultimate nature of the life-principle by the circulation of the blood, mind by the grey matter of the brain, and the physical constitution of sun, stars and comets by our terrestrial chemistry and the matter of our own planet. Verily and indeed, no microscopes, spectroscopes, telescopes, photo-meters, or other physical apparatus can ever be focussed on either the macro- or micro-cosmical highest principles, nor will the *mayavi-rupa* of either yield its mystery to physical inquiry.

The methods of spiritual research and psychological observation are the only efficient agencies to employ; we have to proceed by analogy in everything. Yet the candid men of science must very soon find out that it is not sufficient to examine a few stars—a handful of sand, as it were, from the margin of the shoreless, cosmic ocean—to conclude that these stars are the same as all the other stars, our earth included. That, because they have attained to a certain very great telescopic power, and gauged an area enclosed in the smallest of spaces when compared with what remains, they have, therefore, concurrently perfected the survey of all that exists within even that limited space. For, in truth, they have done nothing of the kind. They have had only a superficial glance at that which is made visible to them under the present conditions, with *the limited power of their vision*. And even though it were helped by telescopes of a hundred-fold stronger power, the case would not alter.

No physical instrument will ever help astronomy to scan distances of the immensity of which that of Sirius, situated at the trifle of 130-odd trillions of miles away from the outer boundary of the spherical area, or even that of Capella, with its extra trifle of 295 trillion miles still farther away [according to exoteric Western astronomy], can give them, as they themselves are well aware, the faintest idea.

For, though an Adept is unable to cross bodily (i.e., in his astral shape) the limits of the solar system, yet he *knows* that, far stretching beyond the telescopic power of detection, there are systems upon systems, the smallest of which would, when compared with the system of Sirius, make the latter seem like an atom of dust imbedded in the great Shamo desert!

The eye of the astronomer, who thinks he also knows of the existence of such systems, has never rested upon them. It has never caught of them even that spectral glimpse, fanciful and hazy as the incoherent vision in a slumbering mind that he has occasionally had of other systems, and yet he verily believes he has gauged INFINITUDE! And yet these immeasurably distant worlds are brought as clear and near to the spiritual eye of the *astral* astronomer as a neighboring bed of daisies may be to the eye of the botanist.

NON-MATERIALISTIC SCIENCE

Whereas it is very difficult to arouse public interest in the static, descriptive, and analytical aspects of science, the popular response is likely to be rapid and intense when the subject of discussion deals with the dynamic aspects of creation and of life. The emotional involvement would become even greater if science would find it possible to consider within its province the study of man not merely as a machine or as one animal among so many others, but as a sensitive, imaginative, and ethical being who remembers the past, and who lives emotionally in the future. Scientists can study man only if they are willing to recognize, not only in the abstract but as an objective fact, that his behavior is determined by historical factors and by nonmaterialistic, "unnatural" goals.

—RENÉ DUBOS

on the lookout

Philosophy and "A New Psychology"

Theosophical students who feel a special interest in the present affirmations concerning "noëtic man" by a growing number of psychotherapists will find a book by Prof. Herbert Fingarette of extraordinary significance. (*The Self in Transformation,* Basic Books, 1963; $8.50.) For Dr. Fingarette, who teaches both psychology and philosophy, here relates the philosophy of reincarnation and Karma to the quest for self-realization—itself actually the key to all "therapy." A seventy-page central section of *The Self in Transformation* is titled "Karma and the Inner World." Dr. Fingarette there writes:

> The assumption in this chapter is that joining a fresh examination of karmic doctrine to an examination of certain aspects of psychoanalytic therapy will throw a new light on therapy, on the meaning of the karmic doctrine, and on certain of our major philosophical and cultural commitments. The task of the reader in such a discussion is to see what the evidence and the argument say rather than to read into the words the Westerner's stock interpretation of "esoteric" doctrines.

To Transcend the "Parochial" Bias

Dr. Fingarette continues:

> The doctrine of Karma, whether we accept it or not, poses profound questions about the structure, transformation, and transcendence of the Self. It raises in new ways general questions of ontology. We may be parochial and dismiss the doctrine, especially its theses on reincarnation, as obvious superstition. Or we may recall that it was not any self-evident spiritual superficiality but the historical accident of official Christian opposition which stamped it out as an important Greek and Roman doctrine, a doctrine profoundly meaningful to a Plato as well as to the masses. Perhaps more significant, it has remained, from the first millennium B.C. until the present, an almost universal belief in the East, even among most of the highly trained and Western-educated contemporary thinkers. As one Western student of the subject quite properly says: "A theory which has been embraced by so large a part of mankind, of many races and religions, and has commended itself to some of the most profound thinkers of all time, cannot be lightly dismissed."

A Philosophical, Not Phenomenological, Concern

Dr. Fingarette is careful to make a subtle point of great importance—that physical "proof" of rebirth is in no way necessary to establish the importance of the idea *philosophically*. "I am not emasculating the reincarnation doctrine by cutting out its physical implications," writes Dr. Fingarette. "I am trying to preserve it whole."

> An investigation of the doctrine will force us to examine from a fresh perspective both the nature of the self and the ontological question, What is Reality?
>
> Certainly we can avoid some irrelevant psychological hurdles if it be stressed at once that, in our discussion of karma and reincarnation, we will not have jumped into an antiscientific position, nor will we be treating reincarnation as "pseudo" or as "super" science. The real issues are philosophical. They have nothing to do with amassing reports of *wunderkinder*, Indian yogis, or the periodic newspaper sensationalisms exploiting fakes or unfortunates claiming inexplicable knowledge of past events. These "marvels" are as philosophically uninteresting to us as it turns out that they are to the great prophets of karma. . . .
>
> Although the belief is nearly universal in India *even today*, there is still no serious concern on the part of spiritual leaders with providing or checking physical or historical proof. Why not? These aspects of the matter are sensed to be and are stated to be trivial and irrelevant to the main point of karmic doctrine.

A Central Affirmation

What Dr. Fingarette is saying, in effect, is that the most profound insights of psychoanalysis, even though they deal chiefly with the psychic elements of man's nature, are based upon the same philosophical assumptions as those of the karma-reincarnation theory. And much of "Karma and the Inner World" is a demonstration that this is so, and why it is so. Dr. Fingarette's synthesis is almost entirely unique, and worthy of reflection, study, and discussion. For a concluding quotation we select the following:

> I am interested here in the karmic doctrine as *sruti*, as an expression of the genuine dialogue of spirit. The latter may be a rare basis for belief. It is no less rare or important, I am sure, in the Christian or Jewish traditions. And, in a related context, it is no less rare than the physicist's interpretations of physical theory as compared with the popular beliefs about science.
>
> I am, of course, urging that the doctrine's spiritual function, a function whose source is in direct experience rather than authoritative teaching, is that of providing a conceptual and action framework within which a person may explore and re-

organize the psychomoral community of selves which constitute the person. That is to say, the function which I consider central to the spiritual experience which underlies the Upanishadic, Buddhist, and probably the Orphic karma-reincarnation teaching is a function systematically related to a process which can be described in psychoanalytic language.

Another Echo of H. P. Blavatsky

The recent reprinting of William Kingsland's *The Gnosis or Ancient Wisdom in the Christian Scriptures* (Allen & Unwin, London, 1962) manifests not only the continued high regard for the author in England, but inevitably, repeats Kingsland's evaluation of Madame H. P. Blavatsky. *The Gnosis in the Christian Scriptures* was first published just after Mr. Kingsland's death in 1937, and the "Kingsland Literary Trust" is composed, by request, of the Council of the Blavatsky Association. It is to Mr. Kingsland that all Theosophists are indebted for the excellent material on H. P. Blavatsky which appears in the *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

The Gnosis combines the fruit of many years of study in *The Secret Doctrine* with Mr. Kingsland's special interest in the difference between esoteric Christianity and the formalized religions of the churches. In the Introduction, he wrote.

> This is the one great fact that our modern knowledge of ancient literature—practically unknown during the first half of last century—has brought to light. The Christian Scriptures can no longer claim to be unique; can no longer claim to be the only and sole guide for distracted humanity in its effort to discover the whence, why, and whither. Doubtless it can claim to be the sole guide for those who know of no other—and how many professing Christians do know of the literature of which I have spoken; or, knowing of it, simply reject it as "heathen"? How many professing Christians know of their own *mystical* literature?

"The Genesis Narrative"

A Chapter with this heading follows the "key" provided in the Stanzas from the *Book of Dzyan.* After quoting from *The Upanishads,* the *Rig Veda, The Book of the Dead,* and *The Bhagavad-Gita* on the subject of cosmogenesis, Mr. Kingsland asks:

> Do the Hebrew Scriptures show any higher conception of "God" than that?
>
> We might find similar concepts and symbolisms in many other cosmogonies, those of Babylon, Assyria, and Chaldea, for example; but what I have here given is sufficient to show that underlying all these varied accounts of "Creation" there are to be found

certain fundamental concepts which are common to all; and it is these concepts, we say, which constitute the Ancient Wisdom or Gnosis from which they one and all derive.

Before I leave these cosmogonies, however, I must refer to the very latest exposition of this ancient doctrine as given to us last century in that astonishing work by Mme H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*. Here we have in the first instance some magnificent Stanzas from *The Book of Dzyan*—a work not as yet known to our scholars. It describes in greater detail than any other Scripture the successive stages in the evolution of the universe; and secondly it gives a voluminous and learned commentary on the Stanzas, and on ancient myths and fables in their relation to the Wisdom-Religion.

"Resurrection" in the New Testament

Mr. Kingsland's comment on the teaching of Christ's crucifixion is clearly in harmony with the writings of H. P. Blavatsky:

Whether the man Jesus was or was not crucified by the Jews as narrated in the Gospel, the *Christ*, the Divine Man, the Logos *is crucified* in physical *Humanity*, and thus becomes the sacrificial victim.

As concerns the individual, however, it is he who has to crucify his lower nature; for only as he does this can he attain to the glorious resurrection from the deadness of his spiritual nature, and the "tomb" in which the Christ principle within him is buried.

As regards our present condition, this "dying" or "crucifixion" is something infinitely more than a mere renouncing of fleshly lusts, or even the severest asceticism. Some little idea of what it involves may be gathered from such works as *Light on the Path* or *The Voice of the Silence*.

A Perspective on Spiritualism

Along with many quotations from *The Voice of the Silence* and *The Secret Doctrine*, we find a useful rendition of H.P.B.'s evaluation of the relationship between the "gnosis" and most spiritualist attitudes:

In the great Temple of Philae there is a bas-relief showing a baptismal ceremony. Two God-Hierophants, one with the head of a hawk representing the Sun, and the other the Ibis-headed Thoth, the god of wisdom and secret learning, are pouring a double stream of "water"—small ansated crosses, the symbol of life, alternating with a sceptre, a symbol of power—over the initiate. Where to-day in the Christian Church is the real Hierophant, the real Master Initiate who can communicate the true "word of power"; the word which gives command over the

"spirits," both good and evil, so that it can be said of any using that "name" that "they cast out devils"? Our lunatic asylums are filled with cases of obsession, and our so-called "Spiritualists" instead of casting them out are in many cases opening wide the door of "mediumship" for the entry of the lowest denizens of the astral plane.

I am not now saying that this danger has not been perceived by the more intelligent "Spiritualists." Many warnings against promiscuous mediumship have been published but the great majority of the cult are seeking nothing but phenomena, and still more phenomena, whilst the phenomena themselves have no claim whatsoever to be called "spiritual." There is nothing "spiritual" in the mere fact of survival; and in any case proof of survival is not proof of immortality; whilst that which survives and "communicates" is never anything but that bundle of experiences, thoughts, and desires which constitutes the lower self, the *personality*, which all practical religion teaches must be *lost* before the true spiritual Self—the Self eternal and immortal in its own right and inherent nature—can be found.

Philosophy and Spiritualism Today

Grahame Barratt, writing under the title "Ethics and the Occult" for the August *Psychic Observer*, continues to bring to contemporary Spiritualist readers the import of Madame Blavatsky's writings. Mr. Barratt notes that while it was doubtless necessary for H. P. Blavatsky to utilize her ability to produce psychic phenomena in seeking to "clear away the dross of the ages . . . she lived to curse the day she ever produced 'these wretched phenomena'." This was because Spiritualists refused then, as they do now, to be weaned from phenomena for phenomena's sake, or to exchange their gullibility for knowledge based on study. On this point, Mr. Barratt writes:

To regard "psychic" happenings as anything to do with spirituality is the commonest of fallacies; *spiritual* things spring from an entirely different *principle* within man altogether, and the sooner the Spiritualist grinds that fact into his soul the better.

The flim-flam that passes currency as psychic experience is suffocating to contemplate. The late W. Q. Judge aptly remarked: "The reasoning powers of some folk are so easily destroyed by wonderment."

Philosophy, not Psychism, Needed

Mr. Barratt is a loyal student of H.P.B.'s *Secret Doctrine* (see THEOSOPHY 49:87; 50:426; 51:94), and draws on her teaching when he says: "Only the spiritual is permanent and satisfying; all else is transitory and unreal from the standpoint of the hidden SELF

which projects but a *ray* of itself in the personal man. The notion that an endless progress awaits the *personal-soul* after bodily death is wholly fallacious; this 'continuity of progress' belongs to the INNER Ego (Monad) alone." It is from this philosophical basis that Mr. Barratt concludes:

> Spiritualism has never met with world approval, although many distinguished people have embraced its ideas. Unchecked psychism has been its undoing: a mixture of truth, half-truth, fraud, and utter piffle deflects serious acceptance of psychic claims. This article began by asking: Is knowledge of after-death states of much value—and has anyone's character been improved by such knowledge? If organized "Camps" and the antics of old and tried psychics lead only to final trickery—the fruit of their life efforts—there is obviously something wrong with the control of psychism. . . .
>
> If the wrongs of the movement cannot be put right by organized control, the very memory of Spiritualism should be obliterated for ever.

Toward Brain Control

A two-part article in *Life* (March 8, 15) on brain control, by Robert Coughlan, first suggests the recognition of a basic human trait: the desire to make people better—especially *other* people; that is, to induce others to act in greater accordance with the way we would like them to act! "Indeed," says Coughlan, "the way other people behave is a shame. It needs correcting; it always has, and certainly not less so in these times. . . . What everybody would agree on wholeheartedly is that human behavior—in thought, word and deed—is far from satisfactory and that something ought to be done about it." He continues in less ironic vein:

> Accepting this, and leaving aside (for the present) difficulties about who should do what to whom, the question is: "What actually *can* be done?" Science has enabled man to bring more and more of his physical environment under control: he knows how to manipulate the behavior of atoms, harness great rivers, move mountains. Can it now give him, in a commensurate degree, the technical means for self-control and control of others? Can human behavior be engineered?

Some Pertinent Comments

Although authorities differ as to ways and means, says Mr. Coughlan, they agree that "behavior *can* be predicted and controlled to a great extent and with a great deal of precision." For example:

> Dr. Robert S. Morison, medical director of the Rockefeller Foundation, comments, "Knowledge of human behavior is becoming organized and accumulative. . . . It is becoming scientific. . . . It is not too early to prepare ourselves for the day when there will be a behavioral science which will make possible the control of human behavior with a high degree of precision."
>
> Dr. Carl R. Rogers, professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin, warns, "We have in the making . . . a science of enormous potential importance, an instrumentality whose social power will make atomic energy seem feeble by comparison."

Mechanics of Behavior

Brain surgeons interested in the behavioral field disregard the human being as a "complex entity" and center their attention on the "physiological apparatus that moves us to do what we should and should not do, and with the power source that makes it go." Therefore, the brain has been charted, so to say, and the various "centers" located. By using the technological developments of electronic engineers and drawing on the pioneer work of a Swiss neurophysiologist, Dr. Walter R. Hess, brain surgeons have discovered that tiny electrodes through the skull into the brain centers can produce reactions in the organism when they are stimulated by electrical current. The usual laboratory procedure is this:

> The head of the anesthetized subject is immobilized. A tiny high-speed drill is used to bore through the skull and sink a minute well shaft through intervening tissue to the point chosen for investigation. With a micromanipulator the operator then inserts an assembly consisting of a miniature electrode attached to two insulated wire filaments. The other, or scalp-side, ends of these wires are then connected with a small terminal socket, and the latter is cemented to the skull. Current fed into a socket goes down the pair of filaments to the electrode and supplies the stimulus—as if the nerve cells there had all fired electrical discharges in unison.

Behavior by Electronics

It was found that under electrical stimulation monkeys and cats could be made to perform "like toys," or, again, made to "freeze in position" until the stimulus was discontinued. A normally peaceable cat was made to become a "bundle of fury." Monkeys could be made to eat voraciously, apparently receiving no report of repletion; alternately, when the hunger-inhibiting mechanism was aroused, the animals refused to eat, even though they should nor-

mally have been hungry. A Yale experiment in social behavior is suggestive:

> Dr. Delgado selected monkey citizens who typified certain social roles, implanted their brains in various appropriate regions, set the transistor-time stimulators, and recorded results.
>
> Sure enough, social activities and relationships in the rhesus colony changed—most dramatically in the case of the boss monkey, who had reserved most of the monkeyhouse for himself and forced the others to stay in one corner. ESB [electrical stimulation of the brain] converted him instantly from a bad-tempered dictator to a benign and tolerant philosopher, and this change in character was somehow sensed almost at once by the other monkeys, who began swarming all over the cage.
>
> Even with quite brief doses of ESB a good many of the new behavioral relationships lasted for days—but not the change in the boss monkey. Once the stimulator was turned off, the new philosopher reverted to his old ornery self and re-established full control.

Hazards—and Some Dire Possibilities

"There is a hazard, of course," says Mr. Coughlan, "in transposing the results of experiments on animals into conclusions about human beings. Monkeys are monkeys, not men. . . . However . . . it is reasonably certain that human responses to ESB would be much the same as the responses observed in animals." There are surgeons, indeed, who have "reported finding in humans locations which, when stimulated, elicit feelings of happiness, anxiety, restlessness, rage or terror, and which suppress pain—even the intractable pain associated with some forms of cancer." Yet, consider the following:

> One hypothetical possibility probably has already occurred to the reader: the 100-socket, 600-electrode human being controlled by a transistor-timed stimulator worn, perhaps in the form of a lapel pin by men and of a jeweled broach by women. Each individual's program would be pre-set and tailored to assigned functions and duties, but it could be changed instantly by overriding radio signals sent out by local (75-socket) controllers, who would be controlled by district (50-socket) controllers, who would be controlled by a regional (25-socket) controller, who would be controlled by a Master Controller (no sockets) who, in his wisdom, would control the behavior of everybody. . . .

The "Tracked" and the "Trackless"

The ultimate degradation for a human being is portrayed as follows:

> A child could be socketed a few months after birth, and "the once-human being thus controlled would be the cheapest of machines to create and operate. The cost of building even a simple robot, like the Westinghouse mechanical man, is probably 10 times that of bearing and raising a child to the age of 16.

To the "black magician," of course, no man's "humanity" is sacred. Such arrogance is in startling contrast to the caution exhibited by those who *really* "know"—the Adepts. These Wise Ones, it is said, *never* infringe upon the will of another, even for his own "good." We might also remind ourselves that the wise man is recognized precisely by his ability to think and choose beyond the influence of external stimulus. Note the following from *The Dhammapada*:

> By what track can you allure One who is enlightened? Trackless indeed is He. No net of desire can catch Him. No craving can entangle Him. He is a Seer of limitless range. . . .
>
> Difficult it is to obtain birth as a human being. Difficult it is to live the life of a man. . . .

Materialism Run Rampant

The second part of Mr. Coughlan's article, titled "The Chemical Mind-Changers" (*Life*, March 15), deals principally with the results of LSD experiments, and those of our readers who are particularly interested in this subject are referred to the article itself. Our attention was caught by one psychologist's premise—that of Dr. B. F. Skinner, of Harvard. Mr. Coughlan writes:

> Dr. Skinner is a psychological "determinist." He maintains that man has illusions that he possesses free-will and that actually all human behavior is caused by material events. . . . Consequently expert scientists owe it to humanity to take charge of events and arrange things so that people behave in ways that will be for their own good. There are plenty of scientists, including some fully as eminent as Dr. Skinner, who disagree with him—in some cases, violently. Yet, when one examines the arguments that swirl around the issues he raises, what is extraordinary is that so many scientists do agree with his basic premise: that man *is* to a large degree controllable and science *can* and *will* know enough about him to manipulate his behavior in many ways and with a great deal of precision. In other words, science does seem to be well on the way to supplying man (for better or worse) with the means to shape a great part of his own thoughts, emotions, actions, and hence his earthly destiny.

H.P.B. once wrote in response to a similar negation of free will

in man ("Psychic and Noëtic Action," THEOSOPHY 41:392): "For the Occultist who knows the difference between the psychic and the noëtic elements in man, this is pure trash, notwithstanding its sound scientific basis."

Heading Toward the Quagmire

Theosophists will be among the first to admit the importance of these various "centers" in the brain. They were well known to the ancients under the term "Chakras," or wheels, but are seldom discussed in Theosophical literature except in their cosmic or astrological aspects. It may well be presumed that such knowledge was deemed too dangerous for humanity in its present state of development. But as has happened in other areas, there has been a breakthrough in the field of physiological psychology, and scientists have stepped in where Angels might fear to tread. Many psychical effects formerly obtained only by psychic means are now produced by chemicals and electronics—and what are actually the physical results of the Ego's mismanagement of its instruments are now mistaken as *causes* of egoic instability. It is in this inversion that the danger lies. Indeed, the whole of H.P.B.'s "Psychic and Noëtic Action" should be reviewed in connection with this subject. There she says:

> Whereas the psychic element (or *Kama-manas*) is common to both the animal and the human being . . . no physiologist, not even the cleverest, will ever be able to solve the mystery of the human mind in its highest spiritual manifestation, or in its dual aspect of the *psychic* and the *noëtic* (or the *manasic*) unless he . . . is prepared to admit the presence of this dual element. . . . Unless the physiologist accepts all this, he will ever be led into a quagmire.

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